

CITY of TORRANCE VOLUNTEER NEWSLETTER

Fall 2012



from Laura Lohnes the Volunteer Coordinator:

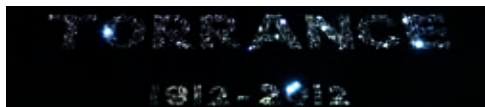
On behalf of the Volunteer Program, I would like to extend our best wishes to your family for a happy and joyous holiday season. I know it is cliché, but the year has flown by and, once again, I have been inspired by the service of our volunteers.

For this issue, we are spotlighting two volunteers whose service led to employment opportunities and gave their career paths a new direction. This issue also highlights some notable events that took place in 2012 and acknowledges the volunteers who worked so diligently to make these events a great success.

The Year in Review

Our City's Centennial Year

The City's Centennial Committee, comprised of thirty-two hardworking volunteer committee members, worked to coordinate a variety of events. The celebration kicked off with the hugely successful, "Lights, Camera, Action" at Wilson Park, when the community gathered together to shine lights into the sky creating a human sign that read, "Torrance 1912 – 2012"



In April, the Centennial Committee also worked to coordinate the neighborhood clean-up in which whole neighborhoods of volunteers came together to do spring cleaning.

Over the summer Leadership Torrance, supported by several volunteers from the Torrance Junior Women's Club, partnered to host the Torrance Photo Contest Awards at the Toyota USA Automotive Museum.

September marked the opening of the City's new Centennial Plaza and City staff volunteered to support the Hometown Parade and the

logistics of the day.

And to top it off, volunteers and the Centennial Committee threw a great "Birthday Bash" at Wilson Park complete with duck races, a performance by American Idol Finalist Tim Urban, crafts, food trucks, and sky divers!

These are just some of the highlights from the City's Centennial Celebration and they exemplify what can be done in the spirit of collaboration, partnership and service. For more information and stories about the Centennial, see the website at www.TorranceCentennial.Org

Torrance Sister City Association Celebrates 40 Years of Sister City Friendship

In October, the Torrance Sister City Association (TSCA) hosted a delegation from Kashiwa, Japan to celebrate the 40th Anniversary of Sister-City relationship between the two cities. On October 12, 2012, Mayor Scotto welcomed the thirty-nine member delegation from Japan at the entrance to City Hall. Mayor of Kashiwa, the Honorable Hiroyasu Akiyama, also addressed the gathering of elected

officials, Sister City Association Members and City Staff.

Volunteer Hazel Taniguchi, Chairperson of the 40th Anniversary Committee and her committee members Werner Willoughby (TSCA President), Lori Chong Eurich, Kerry Cababa and Donna Dunlap created a very fun-filled schedule of events for the Kashiwa delegation.

This whirlwind visit included a reception at the Miyako Hybrid Hotel, a tour of the Toyota USA Auto Museum, attending a Torrance High Football game, a delicious Mayor's Dinner at Il Toscano Ristorante, and a trip to the Getty Villa. A cherry tree was also planted at the Cultural Arts Center to commemorate the Sister City relationship and continuing the tradition of planting a tree every five years.

The Torrance Sister City Association is an independent, non-profit corporation comprised solely of volunteers and sponsored by the City of Torrance. If you are interested in learning more about TSCA, visit their website at www.TorranceSisterCity.Org



*"You must work - we must all work to make the world worthy of its children."
-- Pablo Casals*

Volunteer Spotlight: Volunteer Bradley Tollison's Passion for Transit Led to Job Opportunity

Written by Jennifer Hagihara

"When I first got the iPhone in 2007 with Google Maps on it, it changed my life," Tollison said. "Then Google introduced transit directions and a project was born."

Tollison, a transit user and recently unemployed, attended a Los Angeles Metro meeting with an idea that would put his passion for the transit, industrial cities, and all movement of things and services into reality.

"I asked Kim Turner, Transit Director for the City of Torrance, if their bus system would be on Google Maps," Tollison said. "They didn't have any plans. So I said that I would do it because I wanted it."

On Google Maps, there are three icons: a car, a bus, and a bike. Each will show you how to get from point A to point B by one of those three means of transportation. Tollison wanted to see a transit icon for Torrance users who use Torrance's bus system often.

In order to collect the data for this, Tollison and his friend would drive around Torrance between 10 p.m. and 1 a.m. to all of the bus stops. At each stop, Tollison would enter the stop's coordinates on his laptop. Additionally he entered every route the bus took, and every deviation the route could possibly take to get to a bus stop.

"The whole process took over a year," Tollison added. "It was a lot of hard work and everything was done by hand. There must be tens of thousands of lines all done by hand."

After presenting Tollison's data to the Torrance Transit Department, they hired him in April of 2010. Since then, he has helped the department track how fast buses get from one destination to the other.

"When we first launched the print out, it was deeply satisfying," Tollison explained. "When I get on a bus and see others with their smart phone, I know they got on the bus because of what I built."

Another project Tollison has been working on involves getting an accurate bus schedule from one location to another. For this, he put GPS tracking devices in every Torrance bus and was able to collect data and correlate the data to Google Transit.

Tollison feels very lucky and very happy to work on something he is in love with and passionate about.

"Primarily, it's always good to follow your passion," Tollison said. "Don't be shy if it's a crazy idea or not. I've always chased things I believed in, and it's worked out really well. Just try your best to accomplish what you want."



Bradley Tollison (left) and Ian Daily (right), represent the City's Transit Department at the October 16th City Council Meeting.

More News about Torrance Transit

On October 16, 2012, Bradley Tollison, pictured above left with colleague Ian Daley, appeared before the City Council on October 16, 2012 to provide information regarding new service changes. One of the most exciting changes involves the introduction of the "Rapid" Line 3 Service. During peak hours, this new service will have a 20 minute frequency between the South Bay Galleria and the Long Beach Transit Gallery. Transit launched this new service on November 18, 2012 along with several other changes intended to improve service to our transit customers. For more information about all of these changes, visit www.TorranceCA.Gov/PDF/Final-Changes_Take-One_9-panel.pdf



*"Service to others is the rent you pay for your room here on Earth."
~Muhammad Ali*

Megan Chan's Volunteer Service Leads Her in a New Direction

Written by Jennifer Hagihara

For two months, Megan Chan looked through a multitude of job postings. But it wasn't until her fiancé's father suggested she start volunteering, that she found a temporary job with the City of Torrance.

Chan began her volunteer service at the City by visiting Torrance's website where she found a link called "Volunteer Match." This link is akin to a giant database that connects the prospective volunteer to a volunteer opportunity. After applying, Chan received an interview with Fire Battalion Chief, Martin Serna.

After a well-received interview, they placed Chan in Fire Prevention where she met a small group of volunteers.

"I started off with light filing, and then was trained in other things," Chan said. "Then my supervisor told me the City was hiring a Typist Clerk sometime in the future. She didn't know when, so every day I checked the website."

But instead of just looking for the clerk position, Chan explored other options, and found one called "Personnel Technician."

"My fiancé and I both applied," said Chan. "I practiced interviewing myself for four days, three times per day. By the time I got to the interview it was a breeze—it felt so good."

Two weeks passed by with no word. In the meantime Chan received a lot of support from the other fire prevention volunteers. Then Chan found out she got the job working to support the City's Volunteer Program.

When Chan first started working under her six month contract, she knew she wanted to do as much as possible. She wanted to leave the person following in her footsteps with a good place to start. By the time she finished her first month, she learned a lot about the City, the volunteer database, the process of accepting volunteers, recruiting volunteers, and networking with program coordinators.

"Something that the volunteers didn't have was a handbook—an orientation piece to start," Chan explained. "So I created a volunteer handbook for the volunteers and supervisors. That was the biggest milestone I achieved."

There was a lot of paperwork involved, but Chan enjoyed her time working with the city. She especially enjoyed talking with the volunteers and loved all of her co-workers. However, after her six month contract ended, she was not hired full time. But Chan did receive a volunteer position with the Torrance Police Department where she is happily managing the emergency services database.

With her wedding day fast approaching, Chan, at the moment, is enjoying not working so she can concentrate on wedding arrangements. However, she is a firm believer that staying busy is healthy.

"You can always be busy with something," Chan said. "It can be running, house chores, or applying for jobs. But the nice thing about being busy with volunteer work is that you're around people. You're not disconnected, and it helps me to continue to do something to help people."



Megan Chan

Want to read Megan's Handbook for Volunteers?

If you are interested in reading the City's Volunteer Handbook, you can find it at www.TorranceCA.Gov/PDF/Volunteer_Handbook_Final.pdf. This handbook is intended to help volunteers understand the City's expectations for the volunteer program as well as presenting the City's vision for the program. The handbook includes an agreement that is signed by both the volunteer and the volunteer's supervisor, which is a "handshake" to abide by the guidelines contained in the handbook. Any questions concerning the Volunteer Handbook or the Volunteer Program should be sent to LLohnes@TorranceCA.Gov.

The Year in Review

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Living Legacies: Volunteers recording the history of our World War II Veterans

Without the help of dedicated volunteers the Torrance community would lose a growing amount of valuable history. From April through September 2012, Torrance Public Library collected oral interviews of local veterans in an effort to preserve their stories of sacrifice, reflect the realities of war, and help future generations understand military service. The Living Legacies Project was the result of California State Library's Get Involved Book-To-Action Project. The grant was awarded in part by the U.S. Institute of Museum and Library Services.

The archived oral interviews are posted on the Torrance Public Library's website (www.Library.TorranceCA.Gov/) and have also been forwarded to the Library of Congress to be included with the Veterans History Project at the American Folklife Center. The interviews are currently in the process of being transcribed and will be self-published by the Torrance Public Library.

A big thank you to Eileen Haussmann, Barbara Heughins, Richard Ulyate, Linda Lovett, Jeanette Morrison, and Olivia Cueva-Fernandez, who all volunteered to interview our veterans.

The library plans a second set of Living Legacies interviews to be conducted in 2013. If you are interested in participating in the program, contact the volunteer program at LLohnes@TorranceCA.Gov

Fire Auxiliary and Summer Intern Programs

During 2012, the City launched a pilot program for summer interns designed to introduce students to careers in public service. Intern, Ada Recinos worked in the City Manager's office supporting the Volunteer Program and Jared Johnson interned in the Transit Department. Both interns enjoyed their experience and gained access to a professional network that will help them in their future endeavors. Ms. Recinos is planning to apply for internships in Washington D.C. and will be using a letter of reference from the City of Torrance to supplement her application.

Also in 2012, the Fire Department welcomed seven new Auxiliary Firefighters. Each Auxiliary Firefighter will volunteer to work one 24 hour shift each week with full-time firefighters overseeing their training. This program is designed to cultivate a person's interest in becoming a full-time professional firefighter.

And Also...

The year of 2012 saw successful seasons of youth football, volleyball, and basketball which were all made possible by the hundreds of volunteer coaches. The Madrona Marsh hosted their annual "Make a Difference Day," as well as several other weekend events all made possible by the volunteer service of thousands of community members.

On October 18th, the City participated in "The Great California ShakeOut," emergency preparedness drill and specifically tested the readiness of our volunteers in the Animal Disaster Team, the Torrance Amateur Radio Association (TARA) in addition to the Community Emergency Response Team (CERT).

I wish it were possible for me to recognize and name each and every volunteer that worked to make our community

a better place during 2012. But rest assured, your effort is noticed and greatly appreciated. We at the Volunteer Program are looking forward to a happy 2013!

Send your comments and questions about the City of Torrance Volunteer Program to me at LLohnes@TorranceCA.Gov

200 Basketball Coaches needed for 2013 Season beginning in January

Youth Sports is currently recruiting volunteers to coach basketball, to apply go to www.TorranceCA.Gov/VolunteerProgram.htm and click on "Application for Youth Sports."

For information about basketball rules, FAQs, and to read the Coaches Manual, go to www.TorranceCA.Gov/Parks/9626.htm



Volunteers needed to tend the City Rose Garden

If you have ever passed by the beautiful rose garden located at the northwest corner of Torrance and Maple and wished that you could pick a few blooms, volunteering in the Rose Garden could be your perfect volunteer service opportunity. This opportunity will allow you to improve your gardening skills with fun volunteer gardeners and you will also get to keep the flowers from your "adopted" rose bush. If you are interested in volunteering in the Rose Garden you can apply at:

www.TorranceCA.Gov/VolunteerProgram.htm

Welcome to the Team: Cyndy Rosell, Volunteer Coordinator



Cyndy has worked for the City of Torrance for over six years but she is excited to begin a new chapter in her career working for the Volunteer Program. "I have been fortunate enough to work with the community in several different capacities... and I am excited to extend my experiences in a different direction. Volunteers are key to providing enhanced services and

experiences within the City." We couldn't agree more! Cyndy earned a degree in Art Education from San Jose State, which has helped her "appreciate the beauty in life and the power of sharing talents, skills and education... and how it can positively affect another person." When she is not working for the City, Cyndy enjoys spending time with family and friends, reading, art, vacationing and family day trips to Disneyland. "I am a bit of Disneyland addict," says Cyndy.

Cyndy has a great attitude and she sees inspiration everywhere, even in her favorite movie, "Ferris Bueller's Day off." She says, "The line 'Life moves pretty fast. If you don't stop and look around once in while you could miss it' is one I take to heart." Cyndy shared that a "life changing car accident" gave her a new perspective and now, "Every minute counts." The Volunteer Program would like to welcome Cyndy to the team and we hope she will enjoy "every minute" of her new assignments.